THE EVIDENCE ON "O.K.," BY ALLEN WALKER READ

The Saturday Review of Literature

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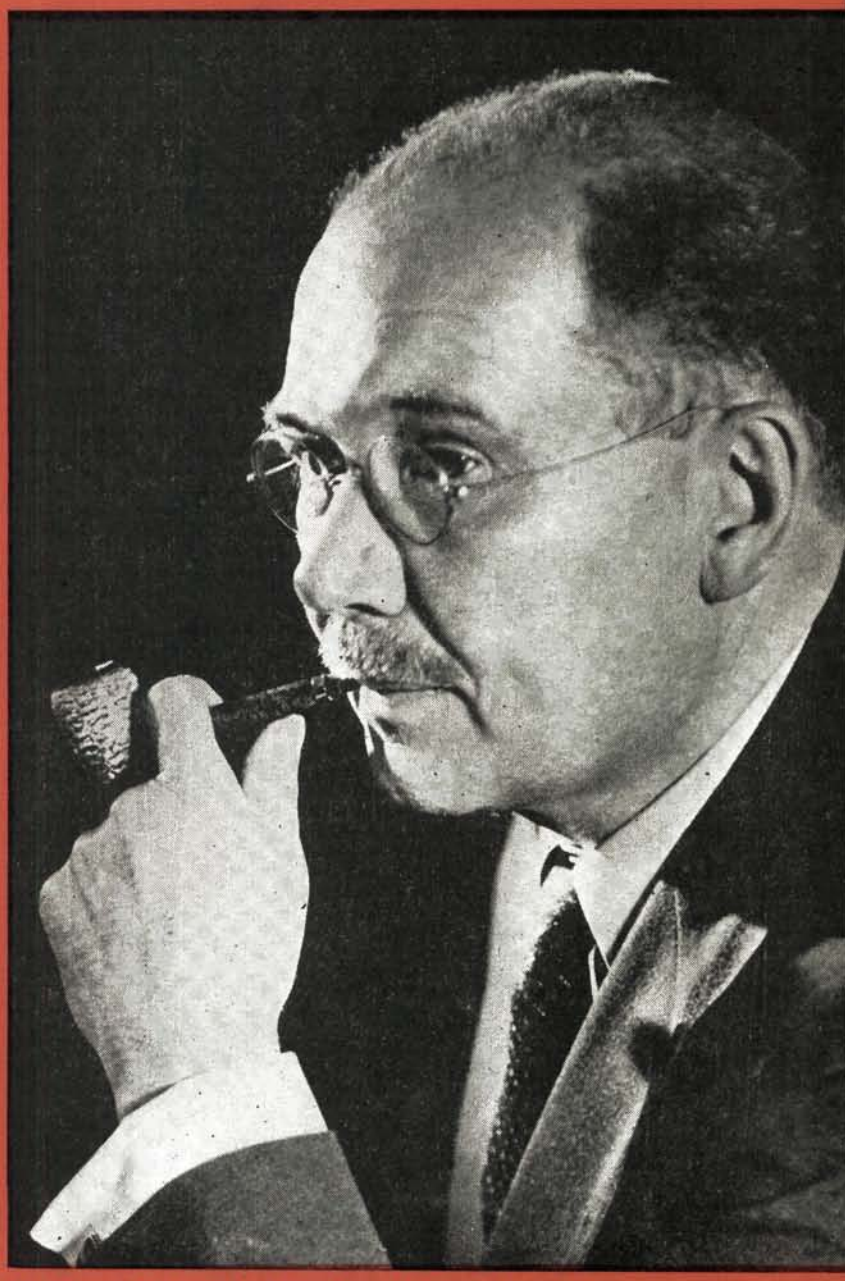

HUBERT HERRING (author of "Good Neighbors") has written a book whose "distinctive merit lies in the mingled realism and sympathy of its approach to the Latin-American scene." *(See page 5)*

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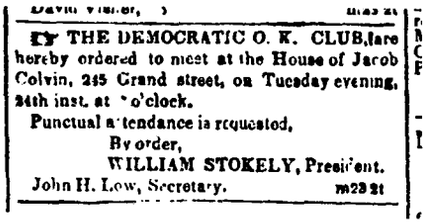
The Saturday Review of Literature

The Evidence on "O. K."

ALLEN WALKER READ

WHEN you first look at the vast quantity of writing on the origin of "O. K.", you find a wilderness of claims and counter-claims. But when you discard the hearsay evidence, the unfounded speculation, and the misread manuscripts, you get a reasonable pattern of historical development. I am able to present here the earliest documentary evidence; first, however, it is necessary to dispose of four alleged instances that arise from misinterpreted manuscripts.

The earliest of these is dated December 8, 1565. The letters O. K. are said to occur at the end of the will of Thomas Cumberland, a lorimer of London, entered in the Archdeaconry Court registers. It is unreasonable to suppose that "O. K." as we know it could have lain dormant for nearly three hundred years. The finder of it, as he says in *Notes and Queries* for June 10, 1911, did not think that the letters were the initials of the scrivener, but some such explanation must be the case. Another alleged instance comes from the year 1757, but an examination of the manuscript shows that it is not "O. K." at all but an ill-written "Att.", standing for "Attestation" or "Attested by" at the end of a document. For many years faith has been put in an instance of 1790, from the records of Summer County, Tennessee, with this entry: "Andrew Jackson, Esq., proved a Bill of Sale from Hugh McGary to Gaspar Mansker, for a negro man, which was O.



BY THE DEMOCRATIC O. K. CLUB, are hereby ordered to meet at the House of Jacob Colvin, 245 Grand street, on Tuesday evening, 24th inst. at 7 o'clock.

Punctual attendance is requested,

By order,

WILLIAM STOKELY, President.

John H. Low, Secretary. m23 2t

From the N. Y. *New Era*, March 23, 1840, p. 3/2 showing the first authentic appearance of *O.K.* As the name of a Democratic club, it signified "Old Kinderhook," after the birthplace of Martin Van Buren, whose re-election the club favored.

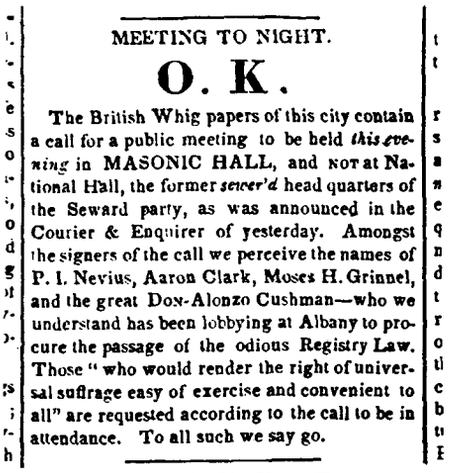
K." But an investigator has examined this manuscript, as he writes in *American Speech* for April, 1941, and finds that the "O. K." is clearly "O. R.", standing for "Order Recorded." Finally, an alleged instance of 1815 has recently turned up in the diary of a Boston businessman, William Richardson. The marks have the appearance of a small "o k," with out periods, interlined at a blotted place in the manuscript; but they do not fit into the sense well and are out of tone with the other parts of the text. All things considered, we can consign the instances of 1565, 1757, 1790, and 1815 to the same limbo.

THE story begins, then, in the Spring of 1840, and is closely bound up with the political situation in New York City. The Democratic Party was intent on re-electing Martin Van Buren for a second term, and they kept up interest, particularly in the radical Locofoco branch, by means of a set of social clubs. On March 11, 1840, the Locofoco newspaper, the New York *New Era*, listed the clubs as follows—the Butt Enders, the Tammany Temple, the Indomitables, the Huge Paws (named for their symbol, a muscular arm grasping a hammer), the Van Buren Association, and the Simon Pures. Twelve days later a new club made its first public appearance by an announcement of a meeting to be held March 24, 1840. This was "The Democratic O. K. Club," and the name marks the first appearance of "O. K."

The meaning of the name was held a secret, in keeping with political practices of the time. The meteoric rise of the "Know-Nothing" party a few years later was based on a similar secrecy, with oaths not to reveal its mysteries. As we shall see later, this "O. K. Club" was named after "Old Kinderhook," the birthplace of Martin Van Buren, near Albany. In papers of the time Van Buren was referred to in such terms as "the magician of Kinderhook," "your cunning Kinderhook Fox," and "the Kinderhook pony." Later in the year, after Van Buren was defeated, a Whig banner carried this inscription:

K. K. K. K. K.
KINDERHOOK KANDIDATE KANT
KOME IT KWITE

The Charter election in New York was to be held April 14, 1840, and the preceding weeks contained much political flurry. The Whigs arranged for a meeting at the Masonic Hall on March 27, to discuss the pending Registry Bill, which they favored. The



MEETING TO NIGHT.

O. K.

The British Whig papers of this city contain a call for a public meeting to be held *this evening* in MASONIC HALL, and NOT at National Hall, the former *sewer'd* head quarters of the Seward party, as was announced in the Courier & Enquirer of yesterday. Amongst the signers of the call we perceive the names of P. I. Nevius, Aaron Clark, Moses H. Grinnel, and the great Don-Alonzo Cushman—who we understand has been lobbying at Albany to procure the passage of the odious Registry Law. Those "who would render the right of universal suffrage easy of exercise and convenient to all" are requested according to the call to be in attendance. To all such we say go.

From the N. Y. *New Era*, March 27, 1840. p. 2/2. Here the letters *O. K.* are used as a cabalistic symbol, to mystify political opponents.

Locofocos were angered by the announcement, addressed to "citizens of New York, without distinction of party," for it was obviously a Whig affair. The *New Era*, therefore, on the morning of the day of the meeting published a paragraph that was a veiled incitement to riot and disturbance. The heading (see reproduction) contained the letters "O. K." in large type, and as the meaning was a secret, they were a cabalistic device to mystify the opposition.

At this meeting on March 27 the Locofocos used "O. K." as a watchword. According to the New York *Times* of March 28, p. 2c: "The *war cry* of the Locofocos, was O. K., the two letters paraded at the head of the article in the Era, to which we have referred. 'Down with the Whigs,

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boys, O. K.', was the shout of these poor, deluded men. We have not words to express our abhorrence of the charlatans who fomented the disturbance." The New York *Morning Herald,* March 28, was more restrained in writing: "About 500 stout strapping men, many of them with sticks, . . . marched three and three, noiselessly and orderly. The word, O. K. was passed from mouth to mouth, a cheer was given, and they rushed into the Hall and upstairs, like a torrent." The New York *Daily Express* in its report, March 28, p. 2b, also mentioned the slogan: "The gang of rioters headed by Custom House officers, and a Locofoco Street Inspector, rushed through the lower hall, shouting the watchword of the New Era, 'O K,' and attacked the persons on the stairs." It will be noted that the expression "O. K." is here definitely attributed to the *New Era,* and by finding the first instance in that paper we are very near the beginning. The New York *Times* on April 10, p. 2c, referred to the *New Era* as "the brazen organ of the O K boys." The newness of "O. K." is further supported by a sentence from the New York *American,* March 28, p. 2c: "This band of the *'Old Butt-Enders,'* reorganized under the new cognomen of *the O. K. club,* seemed to consider the invitation of the New Era as sufficient authority for violence and outrage."

The Whigs would not long put up with this secret Locofoco slogan, and in the next few weeks they satirically attributed many meanings to it. First in the field was the *Morning Herald,* March 30, p. 2a, with this paragraph:

> THE O. K. CLUB—O. K. LITERATURE. —This gang of loafers and litterateurs, who broke in upon the Whigs at Masonic Hall on Friday evening last, and kicked up the row there, are said to number 1,000 bravos, being the picked men of the old "huge paws"—"butt enders"—"roarers," and "ball rollers." The origin of their name, O. K., is curious and characteristic. A few years ago, some person accused Amos Kendall to General Jackson, of being no better than he should be. "Let me examine the papers," said the old hero, "I'll soon tell whether Mr. Kendall is right or wrong." The General did so and found every thing right. "Tie up them papers," said the General. They were tied up. "Mark on them, 'O. K.'," continued the General. O. K. was marked upon them. "By the eternal," said the good old General, taking his pipe from his mouth, "Amos is *Ole Kurrek* (all correct) and no mistake," blowing the smoke up the chimney's cheek. After this the character of Amos was established on the rock of Gibraltar. Harvard College, on hearing of this event, was thrown into extacies, and made the General an LL. D., which he is to this day.
>
> The O. K.'s are now the most original and learned Locofoco club of the day. Their arguments are the most convincing test logicians ever invented.

AS this has more spice than is usual among newspapers of the time, it may be from the pen of James Gordon Bennett himself. Without question it is purely satirical, pouring scorn on the "grand old man" of the Democratic party, then in retirement at the Hermitage; and thus the connection of Jackson with "O. K." is a fabrication out of whole cloth.

This same explanation appeared in the N. Y. *Commercial Advertiser* three days later, April 2, p. 2b: " 'O. K.' —The meaning of these mysterious letters, the power of which, when exerted, is so fatal to the peace and harmony of the city, is a question of grave deliberation in certain quarters. We are not proficients in cabalistic puzzles; but it is asserted that these constituted the endorsement of General Jackson upon papers that he had examined and found right—thus, O. K.—*Oll Korrect.*" This paragraph appeared also in the N. Y. *Spectator,* April 6, p. 1b, and was reprinted in the Albany *Advertiser* and thence taken into the N. Y. *Daily Express,* April 7, p. 2a. Thus it gained wide publicity.

Other papers made sportive explanations, such as that of the *Daily Express* on April 2, p. 2c: " 'O. K.'—Many are puzzled to know the definition of these mysterious letters. It is Arabic, reads backwards, and means *kicked out*—of Masonic Hall." When the Democrats were soundly defeated in an election in Connecticut, the same paper reported (April 11, p. 2c): " 'O. K.'—The wicked Whigs have put a new definition to these strange initials. They translate them now *Old Connecticut.*" The *Times* of April 13, p. 2a, echoed: "Last and most approved version.—O. K. OLD KONNECTICUT!!!" Another Whig version soon current was "Out of 'Kash,' Out of 'Kredit,' Out of 'Karacter,' and Out of 'Klothes'." Some months later a Congressman from Illinois on the floor of the House of Representatives offered the interpretation "Orful Kalamity."

Bennett continued his chaffing in the *Morning Herald* of April 1, p. 2c:

O. K.

NEW YORK, Mar. 27, 1840

MR. BENETT:

SIR: You have taken the leborty (*sic passim*) to Slander us most publickly in this mornings paper. the O. K. Institute which you hav so falsley repsented was established for our own pleasure and enjoyment and was never intended for sich a d - - - d Rascale as your self

A MEMBER

which you was mean enought to pursenate

(*Continued on page* 10)

THIS WEEK

Articles

PAGE

THE EVIDENCE ON "O. K."
By Allen Walker Read 3

DOUBLE-TALK TALES
My Heart's in the By-lines: The Word of Harpoot Keoft
By Otis Ferguson 11

Reviews

GOOD NEIGHBORS
By Hubert Herring
Reviewed by Dexter Perkins 5

POEMS
By Ridgeley Torrence

COCK ON THE RIDGE
By Mary Wrinn

SOUTH STAR
By John Gould Fletcher
Reviewed by Louis Untermeyer 6

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM
By A. J. Cronin
Reviewed by Basil Davenport 7

CHRISTOPHER STRANGE
By Ruth Eleanor McKee
Reviewed by James D. Hart 7

FATHER OF THE BLUES
By W. C. Handy
Reviewed by Charles Edward Smith 10

TWO SURVIVED
By Guy Pearce Jones
Reviewed by Eric Devine 12

SHELTER
By Jane Nicholson
Reviewed by Frances Smyth 12

SEA POWER IN THE MACHINE AGE
By Bernard Brodie
Reviewed by W. D. Puleston 13

FOR THE HEATHEN ARE WRONG
By Eugene Bagger
Reviewed by Joseph Hilton Smyth 14

THE SHADOW OF THE ARROW
By Margaret Long, M.D.
Reviewed by Edwin L. Sabin 14

WOLF CHILD AND HUMAN CHILD
By Arnold Gesell
Reviewed by Goodwin Watson 15

Departments

YOUR LITERARY I.Q. 6
EDITORIAL 8
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 9
TRADE WINDS 16
THE CRIMINAL RECORD 17
BOOKS IN BRIEF 17
DOUBLE-CROSTICS: No. 382 19

THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Company, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President; James Nelson, Vice-President and Treasurer; Amy Loveman, Secretary; George Dilkes, Business Manager. Subscription, $4 a year; $4.50 in Canada; $5 in other countries. At least 3 weeks' notice required for changes of address; both old and new addresses must be given. Printed in U. S. A. Vol. XXIV, No. 13, July 19, 1941. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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Geographical Companions

GOOD NEIGHBORS. Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Seventeen Other Countries. By Hubert Herring. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1941. 381 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by DEXTER PERKINS

THE shadow of the war in Europe hangs heavy over the New World today. On the one side of the Atlantic a grim and ruthless despotism prepares ever new projects of conquest; on the other, this country of ours girds itself in more and more far-reaching opposition to the totalitarian ideal. It seeks to practise a policy of friendship and understanding with the twenty other republics of the New World; it seeks to preserve and enlarge the democratic spirit in the diplomacy of the Western hemisphere. What are its chances of success? How stands the reckoning, as of 1941.

Mr. Hubert Herring is well equipped to answer this question, both by the breadth of his knowledge of Latin America, and by the candor of his spirit. The book which he has written deals only cursorily—perhaps too cursorily—with all but the ABC powers. It is written for the vague person known as the "general reader," rather than for scholars. Its distinctive merit lies in the mingled realism and sympathy of its approach to the Latin-American scene, in the practical good sense and clear-eyed awareness of future perils which the author repeatedly demonstrates.

Ignorance and sentimentality are alike hostile to the forging of an effective policy with regard to Latin America. We like to speak of them as democracies; but they deserve such a name, of course, only in varying degrees. Applied to Paraguay or Bolivia, or the Dominican Republic, or the smaller states of Central America, the word has little content. It has little content in Haiti, or in Ecuador. The corporative state of General Getulio Vargas in Brazil, as Mr. Herring makes clear, is a mockery of democratic forms. But, in contrast, democratic processes have a considerable vitality in Argentina, in Uruguay, in Chile, in present-day Colombia; the Aprista movement in Peru is inspired by democratic ideals; to the rigid dictatorship of Gomez in Venezuela has succeeded a regime more nearly inspired with the democratic spirit; in Mexico democratic forces have been bravely at work since the revolution of 1910. But the fight for democracy is being fought—it has not been won; this Mr. Herring makes clear again and again.

And the perils are real. There can be no question of the fact that Hitlerian Germany is paying great attention to many of the Latin-American states; it has large diplomatic representation in the more important ones; and its work is abetted by some sections of the German population, especially in the three great states of South America, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Mr. Herring fears, also, the attitude of a great land-owning upper class, all too authoritarian in its sympathies, all too ready to oppose social reform and the progress of the masses with "strong" government.

The easy answer to this would be a German defeat in the present war. But is that answer a complete one? Mr. Herring calls attention to a real danger in the vast increase of the material power of our own country, an increase not always viewed with enthusiasm by those who live below the Rio Grande. Will the policy of Washington always be patient and forbearing? Will the open hand of economic assistance never be withdrawn? Will we be content to persuade, or will we in due course seek to coerce the states of Latin America, and shape them to our will and purposes by the power of the sword? Latin Americans ask this question, if our own people do not; they are not so sure as we are that they are threatened from abroad; and they evaluate our own policy in the light of a past that has not always been happy for them. Americans should realize all this; they will do so if they read "Good Neighbors."

—*Map from "South American Primer," by Katherine Rodell.*

They will get, too, much useful information on the politics and economy of the three great states already mentioned, and a suggestive summary of the principal factors in the political and economic life of the rest.

Dexter Perkins is the author of "Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine."

Tour de Force

Lines to a Horse Riding in a Motor Truck

By Arthur W. Bell

WAS life in harness but a passing phase?
In mystified bewilderment he rides,
Nor can he reconcile the part he plays
With changed perspective which the mode provides.
He has his feet no longer on the ground;
His doom appears foreshadowed by his stance,
In looking backward with a wistful glance
As well aware of being outward bound.
The right to ride was never better earned;
A heritage of drudgery and toil
Has met relief with gasoline and oil,
And here we see the tables neatly turned:—
By dint of third dimensional resource
Now progress puts the cart beneath the horse.

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Richness and Restraint

Three Reviews by Louis Untermeyer

POEMS. By Ridgely Torrence. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1941. 121 *pp.* $1.75.

COCK ON THE RIDGE. By Mary J. J. Wrinn. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1941. 139 *pp.* $2.

SOUTH STAR. By John Gould Fletcher. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1941. 116 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THE case of Ridgely Torrence is one of the most puzzling in modern poetry. His first volume appeared at the very beginning of the century, and it was immediately evident that Torrence promised more than most of his contemporaries. But twenty-five years passed before his second book, "Hesperides," was published. Another sixteen years have brought "Poems," which is a reissue of "Hesperides" with the addition of some new poems. The volume presents a continuing problem, a conflict without solution. On the negative side there is the question of power withheld or diminished, the creative energy dissipated, the expectation unfulfilled. Born in the same year as Robert Frost, a little younger than Edwin Arlington Robinson and Amy Lowell, Torrence (so his admirers believe) should have equalled his distinguished compatriots in range and intensity. Yet what happened to the gift which was praised for its "burning passion" and a reputation which, a quarter of a century ago, was rated "among the best of the period?" The present volume, deliberate if not definite, offers thirty-four poems, most of which were written fifteen to thirty years ago.

On the affirmative side there is the discrimination which denies publication to anything meretricious. The very restraint which limits the expression of a lifetime to thirty-four poems emphasizes the tensity of "The Bird and the Tree," that unforgettable poem of a lynching; "The Singers in a Cloud," one of the finest lyrical poems of the period; "Eye-Witness," an evocation of the second coming of Christ seen through the eyes of a tramp; and "The Son," which packs a life tragedy in sixteen lyrical lines. That these poems are not new is anything but an unfavorable fact; the familiarity, due to constant quotation, is a proof of their condensed and dateless power.

It is the lack of restraint which keeps Miss Wrinn's verse from being better than it is, which stops it from being as good as it might be. As a teacher, Miss Wrinn understands the power of condensation and discipline; as a craftsman, she explores the disputed terrain between tradition and experiment. But as a poet she brings little to the reader which he does not readily anticipate. At its best her verse is governed and precise; the figures are neither too familiar nor too sensational. But—alas, that repeated but inevitable "but"—Miss Wrinn attempts too much, too various a range in subjects, too many styles. In one moderately sized volume she offers poetry of high seriousness and verse of the lightest possible texture, weighted

Ridgely Torrence

quatrains and whimsical couplets, bucolic sonnets and ballades with a double refrain, strict sapphics and loose "free" verse. Miss Wrinn's facility leads her to commit cliches which she would never permit her pupils to employ, stereotypes as worn as "sickening shame," "throbbing engine," "dark distress," "frail blossoms," "slender string," "lonely struggle," "gypsy heart." It is in the first twenty pages that Miss Wrinn is most ingratiating, in the title-poem and the transcripts of a young boy's mind in the short group called "Awakening."

John Gould Fletcher's latest volume suffers from the same defects as Miss Wrinn's first. Its territory is more restricted—it limits itself to Arkansas, the Deep South, and the Upper South—but it is unrestrained in diction, even in direction. It is surprising that an erstwhile Imagist, devoted to the scrupulous phrase and the exact word, should compose anything so haphazard in style, so sprawling in construction, so awkward in effect. It is incredible that the author of riotous "color symphonies" should devote himself to panoramas of such dullness. The long historical poem, "The Story of Arkansas," is relieved by lyrical interruptions, but it is clogged with passages as prosy as:

> Out of the fullness of time,
> Urged by the energy of Ambrose H. Sevier—
> Since Michigan stood clamoring at the gates
> Of the Union, why not this, the white man's last frontier,
> Facing the Indian nations packed to west,
> While Texas to the south shook itself free?

The autobiographical poems are far better; they reflect the poet's larger preoccupations and combine old backgrounds with a renewed maturity. The second half of the book is the richest; it is regional verse which deserves a greater audience than it is likely to get. It is a pity Mr. Fletcher was not persuaded to cut his volume in two.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

A QUIZ ON DICKENS'S CHARACTERS

This week's quiz is the contribution of Armand J. Gerson, of Philadelphia. Listed below are the last names of twenty well-known Dickens characters. Can you place them in their respective books and supply their first names? Allowing 2½ points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 10.

1. Micawber.
2. Quilp.
3. Scrooge.
4. Steerforth.
5. Squeers.
6. Gargery.
7. Clennam.
8. Murdstone.
9. Jasper.
10. Dr. Manette.
11. Cuttle.
12. Carton.
13. Skimpole.
14. Gay.
15. Gamp.
16. Boffin.
17. Tapley.
18. Gradgrind.
19. Magwitch.
20. Nipper.

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The Universals of A. J. Cronin

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM. By A. J. Cronin. Boston: Little, Brown. 1941. 344 *pp.* $2.50.

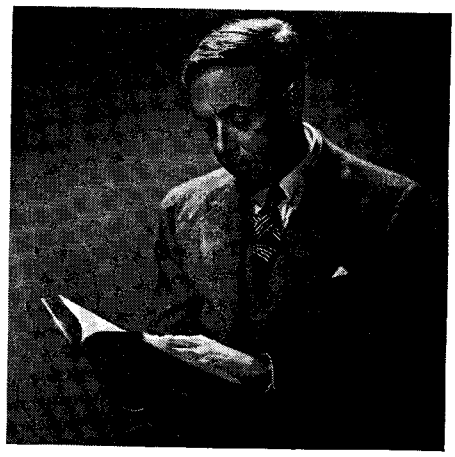
Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THIS book might be called a "Lincoln's doctor's dog"—a phrase which readers of *The Saturday Review* will remember from a leading article by Mr. George Stevens, in which he quoted the saying among publishers that all books about Lincoln sell, all books about doctors sell, and all books about dogs sell; therefore a fortune awaited the man who will write a book about Lincoln's doctor's dog. Similarly it may be said of this latest book by the author of "Hatter's Castle" and "The Citadel" that all novels with a religious theme sell, all books with a Chinese setting sell, and, if well done at all, all long books crowded with melodramatic incidents sell; and this book has them all.

It is the story of Father Francis, a Scottish priest of the Roman Catholic Church, a naturally saintly soul whose unconventionality and insistence on placing human kindness above doctrines made him always something of a problem to his superiors. We follow his whole life; his poverty-stricken, Dickensian childhood in a Tweedside town, where he is rescued, like David Copperfield, by a good aunt from another who is a Dickensian ogress; the tragic death of the girl he loved, which removed the last obstacle from his vocation for the priesthood; his seminarian days in Spain, and his first curacy, where he succeeded in providing recreation for the young people in spite of his Puritanical rector, but at the cost of being himself exiled to a mission in China, where the bulk of the book is laid. Here he builds up a congregation from nothing, and brings it successfully through a pestilence and a civil war; and so home in his old age to cultivate his garden, go fishing like Saint Peter, and scandalize the strict by maintaining that there is salvation for Confucians too.

All this is done with a skill that must command the profound admiration of anyone interested in the craft of fiction. One can but admire the way in which, though any love story is of course impossible, the author has introduced something of the tension which in most books is procluded by a love episode in the battle of wills between the humbly born Father Francis and the mission Sister who can never forget that she is of the bluest German blood. And though the book is skillful to the point of being contrived, and though it is certainly melodramatic, it does not, as such books often do, seem insincere. Again and again the author makes use of such long coincidences and last-minute rescues to save a situation, whether it is to baffle bandits or to unmask a hysterical miracle-monger, or to save the father's reputation, that only a sincerity which can be felt could keep the reader eagerly reading.

And yet, with all its merits, when one predicts for it a wide success, one cannot ungrudgingly add that it will be wholly deserved. Perhaps the defect will lie less in the book than in too many of its readers, who are certain to take it not as a good if sometimes conventional story whose value is much that of "If Winter Comes," but as an important moral treatise, which it is not. It is always possible to secure a wide public by announcing that if we were all kind to each other the world would be a better place; but that public will be largely drawn from those who, in Mr. Thornton Wilder's phrase, "mistake a protracted amiability for the whole conduct of life." There will be more readers to follow Father Francis in running away from the dogmatic seminary than will follow him into the self-sacrifice of the Chinese mission.



A. J. Cronin

Ruth Eleanor McKee

The Comprehensive Hero

CHRISTOPHER STRANGE. By Ruth Eleanor McKee. New York: Doubleday Doran & Co. 1941. 706 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JAMES D. HART

THIS novel opens in Concord, Massachusetts in 1854 and ends in Palm Springs, California in 1901, and between these two places and these two dates its hero Christopher Strange becomes involved in almost every dynamic bit of history that shaped California. From an idealistic young lawyer fresh out of Harvard to a worn, prematurely-aged California rancher, he comes to know everybody worth knowing from Emerson and Thoreau to Senator Broderick and Senator Stanford; but despite all the activity in which he participates, and all the commanding figures with whom he associates, he remains a bloodless character. Miss McKee is so concerned with seeing to it that her hero and his father and all their children and relatives get involved in everything that happens that the reader is swept into a whirlwind of activity that blurs character presentation. The young, pure, smart Christopher, governed by a New England conscience, is perpetually contrasted with the mean, rough, and unscrupulous characters with whom he comes into contact, but the emphasis falls on the events and leaves the persons unreal.

The novel is unnecessarily crowded and prolix. Every page from first to last has its own crisis. Climax presses hard upon climax until the reader is fagged by Indian massacres and mutilations, masked bandits, shootings, panthers attacking horses, assassinations and plain murders, epidemics, fires, droughts, legal battles, and endless deaths of children and relatives. Fearful lest she forget a single event in California history, Miss McKee even inserts parenthetical passages of history that supposedly drift through the hero's mind when he chances to see a man who was involved in an incident that Christopher himself happened to miss. History is worked up and dumped into the story in batches. Nothing is selected and little is assimilated. There is plenty of activity but almost no real life. Miss McKee would have done well to recall the interest of Thoreau, an acquaintance of the elder Strange, who got at the essence of life because he said his desire was "to observe what transpires, not in the street, but in the mind and heart of me!"

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THOREAU AND WHITMAN ON DEMOCRACY

THE revolutionaries of the birth of liberalism and democracy believed that democratic and liberal literature would guide, interpret, and lead the revolution. They were right in their belief, although not always so in the men and works they believed in. Therefore, it is interesting to sum up, however briefly and imperfectly, the democratic attitudes of two great American rebels, Thoreau and Whitman. Each is a representative figure in the blend we call American democracy.

At first sight they seem antithetical. Thoreau believed only in the individual. And the individual he believed in was no mass-man, no real brother, or mere compound of earth and salt, but a self-conquered soul and a disciplined mind. Such a man was the eternal possibility of human nature, yet the possibility had to be realized in some way before Thoreau would admit him as a brother. Then and only then did he become worth more than empires and associations, his rights more important than law or politics, and his independence worth dying for. But this seemingly aristocratic principle was qualified with Thoreau by what the woodland philosopher believed his neighbor had to be and do in order to become a worthy individual. His law must be to respect the latent soul which exists in every man, and in so doing to judge society by a set of values in which success and power and merit were given definitions very different from those current in an America rapidly growing materialistic. Thoreau's quite unworkable democracy would have been a society of individuals equal only in opportunities for simple living, and in respect for the best in the personality and faith of their neighbors. Nevertheless, that insistence upon the right and necessity to be an individual which is an indispensable part of our blend of democracy, gets its most wholehearted support in the very over-emphasis of Thoreau. He gives us the backbone of democracy.

It was the much-misunderstood Walt Whitman who was the practical politician, who knew (as Thoreau never did) how democracy works, and fails to work. His immense optimism for democratic man in a new world, was, as he often said, an optimism for a possible future which he did not always think was a probable one. His faith was in the prevailing common sense and common goodness of the mass man, provided his environment and, still more, his ideals, are right. This is the democratic faith. Whitman's solidarity was based upon love, which, for him, was no abstract spiritual fervor, but what he believed to be the natural human liking of one freely developed man or woman for another, a liking compounded of every relevant element from sex to moral sympathy. But this liking had to be set free in fine bodies generously reared in ideas from which old prejudices of human inequality—whether of rank, wealth, station, creed, or race—had been purged in the free air of a new continent. Only in a new world could this happen, for only in a new world could the average man, the mass man, who represented mankind far better than the leaders, get self-respect and enough independence to achieve solidarity and so make a new kind of state. With love of mankind, with a knowledge of what had happened in America, and a vision of what might happen, Whitman's faith was inevitable for him, and possible for us, although it is no longer necessary to believe that America is the only promised land. This kind of faith in mankind is part of our blend of democracy.

Yet it is a careless reader of either Thoreau or Whitman who does not see in what ominous warning both men agree. It is explicit and implicit on every page of "Walden" and the "Leaves of Grass." Thoreau was a spiritual economist, Whitman a spiritual sociologist—nor can professionals in these so-called sciences afford to neglect either. When it came to the progress of American society in the years before that Civil War, in which material and moral issues were inextricably mingled, both men had their feet solidly on the ground. They saw that the values their countrymen were seeking were increasingly plutocratic and irreligious. They saw that wealth, which almost made itself in America, was a greater danger to democracy than the old order abroad or politics at home. And both men, in their criticisms, took a position which is still in advance of the progressives and the socialists which were to follow them. For each in his way constantly maintained that the prime evil was not in the unequal distribution of this new-world wealth (though that was bad enough) but in the destruction of all true values for happiness, when the best energies of a country were geared to money-making. Thoreau wrote of the quiet desperation of the lives of his supposedly successful neighbors; Whitman of the unsexing of a population, and of the narrowing of his free-hearted, fine-bodied democrats into a poor imitation of successful machines.

H. S. C.

Movies

Babette Deutsch

DAY, shredded by some chattering machine,
Is tossed into the bin. The mind, having no part
In this evening's purchase, has strolled up the block.
And at once is poured enormously from the screen
Into the empty paper bag of the heart
The grocery emotions: the old stock
Love and hate, grief and envy and fear,
With the jazz, the razz, wrapped in gold cellophane,
The lie, the blow, the flight, the face to face
Encounter, and the globed glycerine tear,
The yardage smile, the panic in the plane,
The slow-dissolving agglutinate embrace.
All neatly packaged, to carry home and undo
At midnight, when mind returns, chilly and gruff.
But there is always somewhere a clean rag
To wipe stains off the table when they are new.
Tomorrow's provisions lie spread out, surely enough.
And you can save, if you like, the empty paper bag.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Paris

SIR:—The following is from a letter just received from a correspondent in Paris. Please make use of it in such way as you see fit.

B. W. HUEBSCH.
The Viking Press

The heads of our literature stand up against what is being done and refuse to collaborate with the "paid" newspapers and magazines. Men like André Gide, Martin du Gard, Mauriac, Duhamel, Marcel Bouteron, and Bergson, who died of grief. A man like Valery for instance finds himself practically reduced to starvation since he chooses not to write in the German paid magazines or newspapers and has had his post taken away from him. Women writers like Simone Ratel and Germaine Beaumont are now selling one by one the things they possess and cherish so as to keep alive after turning down offers and contracts from German paid groups. I know what a friend of France you are and I would be deeply grateful if you could tell this around you, so that your compatriots may realize all the suffering and the resisting that is going on in spite of the silence which is enforced on us.

Thanks

SIR:—In no. 7 of Answers to Literary Quiz in yours of the 12th inst. you speak of Peter Finley Dunne. His name was Finley Peter Dunne. In future mnemonic doubts about the sequence, be guided by remembering that the order is alphabetical.

F. P. ADAMS.
New York City.

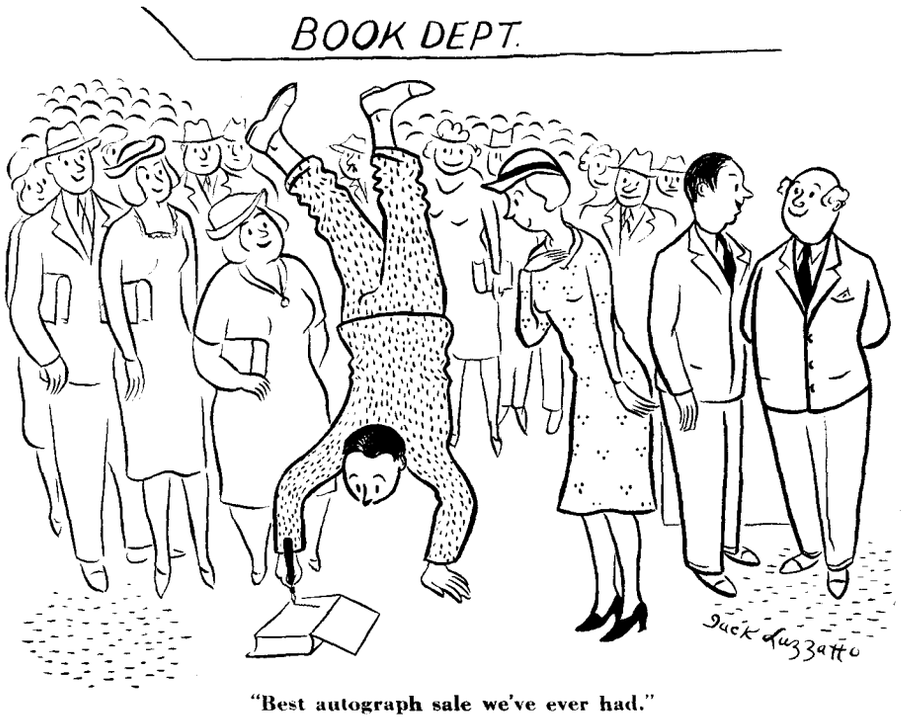
A Floating Inquiry

SIR:—Speaking of quizzes—and for the moment I am not—does anyone know what musical comedy of thirty or forty (or fifty?) years ago contained this little gem which lately floated up out of my unconscious? Would it be *The Little Tycoon?*

Some foreign powers are saying how
That Britain is decaying now.
That is the text of iconoclastic sermons.
The French agree at any rate
That Britains are degenerate,
Whatever they may think about the Germans.
These daring foreign blades
Get the truth from Dr. Leyds.
I'm told he pays them half a franc a line—ah—
They may write till all is blue
But for all the harm they do
They might just as well be somewhere out in China.

This query, however, has no par value.

G. W. BARNES.
New York City.



"Best autograph sale we've ever had."

The Language of Goethe

SIR:—Recently you ran an editorial—a most interesting and laudable piece about America as the last refuge of German civilization ["The Other Germany," May 24]. Oddly enough a book I am now translating, by Heinrich Hauser, makes the same point; one of his friends in Germany said to him, "I'm going to take the family to America, where you're allowed to be German; you're not allowed to be German here."

But your editorial also moved me to send you the enclosure, which has been running in my head for a long time. We offer a haven for the best Germans and the best of German civilization, but to one thing we cannot offer asylum, because it is doomed: the German language. In Germany it is dead. Anyone who has read "Mein Kampf" in German, and then read almost any of the German prose written in the last five or six years in Germany, will recognize that Hitler is a stylistic as well as political Fuehrer, or rather Verfuehrer.

It would almost be true to say that my greatest personal reason for hating Hitler is his destruction of a great language. And I venture to think that if you choose to circulate the enclosed little epitaph among the German-speaking writers here, many of them will subscribe to it willingly, if with heavy hearts.

Hier ruht
in ungeweihter Erde
die Sprache von Luther, Goethe
und Lessing
von Beethoven, Carl Schurz, Kant
und Robert Koch
von Gutenberg und Dürer und
Roentgen
erschlagen von einem österreichischen Hilsarbeiter
einem Ueberläufer, einen Berufslügner
und einigen Meuchelmördern

Dies Denkmal wurde ihr gesetzt
durch einen fremden Liebhaber in fernem Lande

Gott geb ihr selig Auferstehn!

BARROWS MUSSEY.
Brattleboro, Vermont.

Information, Please

SIR:—Can any of your readers inform me of the present whereabouts of either or both of the following items: the Shelley notebook that was in the Spoor Sale in 1939; a transcript in Mrs. Shelley's hand of three poems by Shelley, (*To Stella, Methought I was a billow* and *On Keats*) consisting of a single page headed "MS Fragments," which was in the hands of W. T. Spencer of London in 1922? I should be very grateful for any information.

ELIZABETH NITCHIE.
Goucher College,
Baltimore, Maryland.

The Wodehouse Deflation

SIR: No doubt Germany has banned copies of your July 5 issue if only because of the editorial by Elmer Davis ["The Non-Belligerent"]. But I hope that somehow a copy does get smuggled into the country and placed before Mr. Wodehouse. The noise from that deflation is certain to be heard across the Channel.

FRANKLIN YOUNG.
Cambridge, Mass.

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Memphis Symphony

FATHER OF THE BLUES. By W. C. Handy. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. 317 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by CHARLES EDWARD SMITH

IT was a Memphis fiddler, stopping off in W. C. Handy's home town, who stimulated the latter's interest in music and whose stories of Beale Street made him want to discover for himself that glittering universe. Today a public square on Beale Street is named after him in recognition of his contributions to the music of Memphis and America. Now Mr. Handy has written the chronicle of his sixty-seven years, with the editorial assistance of the distinguished Negro writer, Arna Bontemps, and it is both an absorbing story of a unique individual in Negro life and a first-hand glimpse of Negro popular music.

The chronicle begins in the town of Florence, Alabama, where William Christopher Handy was born "eight years after surrender," November 16, 1873. His father, like his grandfather, was a Methodist minister, and those were the days when blues were sinful songs. His first important job, musically speaking, was with Mahara's Minstrels in the 1890's, and Mr. Handy recreates in all its colorful detail that period which Dr. Alain Locke has called "The Second Age of Minstrelsy." Organizing bands in Mississippi and in Memphis, Mr. Handy gradually became aware of the significance of that "earth-born music"—the music of roustabout and plantation hand. During a mayoralty campaign for Boss Crump he wrote the song called "Mr. Crump" that in 1912 became "The Memphis Blues." (Special satirical verses written by Handy apparently took root, for almost twenty years later a folk-song was recorded called, *If Mr. Crump Don't Like It.*)

The Negro blues belonged to the folk and were played and sung from Pensacola to Dallas, north to St. Louis and Chicago. Memphis was peripheral to pianistic ragtime that had its flowering in St. Louis, and to instrumental jazz that developed in New Orleans; but Memphis was at the core of Negro music *that grew out of the folk* and in successive waves of influence—the Minstrels, Negro popular, and show music, we see the true importance of the city. For without going far from that locale, Handy can, and does, include some of the more important names in Negro popular music which have given Memphis the distinction of being far superior in that respect to Tin Pan Alley.

W. C. Handy is a great name in American music. He has written his

Kesslere

W. C. Handy

story with dignity, in simple, colorful prose that recreates a full lifetime, sometimes with utter seriousness and sometimes with a quiet humor that reminds one of his slow, infectious smile. The directness of his approach, in talking of the fight to live and the fight for the right to human dignity, has a strong impact and lets one know precisely what the Negro faces in America. Thus the book, in addition to telling you why the blues was born, throws considerable light on Negro life in America.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Wilkins Micawber, in "David Copperfield."
2. Daniel Quilp, in "The Old Curiosity Shop."
3. Ebenezer Scrooge, in "A Christmas Carol."
4. James Steerforth, in "David Copperfield."
5. Wackford Squeers, in "Nicholas Nickleby."
6. Joe Gargery, in "Great Expectations."
7. Arthur Glennam, in "Little Dorrit."
8. Edward Murdstone, in "David Copperfield."
9. John Jasper, in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."
10. Alexandre Manette, in "A Tale of Two Cities."
11. Daniel Cuttle, in "Dombey and Son."
12. Sydney Carton, in "A Tale of Two Cities."
13. Harold Skimpole, in "Bleak House."
14. Walter Gay, in "Dombey and Son."
15. Sarah Gamp, in "Martin Chuzzlewit."
16. Nicodemus Boffin, in "Our Mutual Friend."
17. Mark Tapley, in "Martin Chuzzlewit."
18. Thomas Gradgrind, in "Hard Times."
19. Abel Magwitch, in "Great Expectations."
20. Susan Nipper, in "Dombey and Son."

THE EVIDENCE ON "O. K."

(*Continued from page* 4)

ANSWER—I cry you mercy, O. K. I have no wish to depreciate from the high reputation of so erudite a Society. Nor shall I ever interfere with your amusements in knocking down people. Col. Webb and you may enjoy a monopoly of that business.—*Ed. Herald.*

The use of "K. O." in the sense of "kicked out" must have been unusually galling to the Locofocos. It formed a headline in the N. Y. *Times* of April 6, p. 2b:

K. O.
KICKED OUT

The K O system is working admirably. It was first put in operation at Masonic Hall on Friday night, March 27th, where the bullying O K's, who attempted to disturb and break up a peaceable meeting of citizens were KICKED OUT.

And in referring to the Tammany mayor the next day, p. 2b, they added "K. H. O." in black boldface type, evidently meaning "Kick Him Out." When a Locofoco vote canvasser was expelled from a hotel, they said (April 9, p. 2b) that "Van Buren's Janizary was K O of the kitchen."

The Locofocos were obliged to meet this barrage of ridicule in some fashion. They could best neutralize the scorn by blandly accepting the "oll korrect" story, and thus offset the "K. O." headlines by "O. K." headlines of their own. Therefore the *New Era* on April 9 and 10 accepted the meaning suggested by the Whigs and launched the expression into its present-day usage (see reproduction). At a meeting of the Democratic voters of the 12th Ward on April 9, as reported in the *New Era* of April 11th, p. 3d, they adopted this resolution: "Resolved, We will say to Martin Van Buren, O. K., you can remain at the white house for another four years." The Whig papers soon followed suit, and on April 14 both the *Times* (p. 2d) and the *Morning Courier* (p. 2c), reporting good news from Ohio, had the headline, "CLEVELAND, O. K.!!" Illustrative of the new usage is this passage from the *Morning Herald* of April 21, p. 2d: "The Brigadier soon reached the Battery, reviewed his Brigade, found 'all the whiskers put in' and pronounced every thing O. K. As soon as the Irish rebels heard of this movement, they flung away their shelelahs, and was K. O. in no time."

Meanwhile the O. K. Club continued to put "O. K." on their banners as they marched in parades and torch-light processions, and an "O. K. Ball" was held. The report of one procession, in the *Daily Express*, April 11,

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p. 2c, makes the point of the newness of "O. K.": "We observed in the Tammany Procession 'the Butt Enders,' 'Indomitables,' and 'Huge Paws,' with the same banners they had last spring. The O. K. concern was the only novelty." In this same procession, according to the *New Era* of April 21, p. 2a, one of the banners had on it "a huge Cabbage mounted upon legs, singing out O. K. to General Harrison, and chasing him like a racer." Even as late as May 8 the Locofocos still regarded "O. K." as their special cabalistic property.

LATE in May, "O. K." had so far passed into general usage that the Locofocos felt free to divulge its original significance. The following, from the *New Era* of May 27, p. 2f, is the passage that reveals the "Old Kinderhook" signification, before "all correct" supplanted it:

> JACKSON BREAST PIN. We acknowledge the receipt of a very pretty gold Pin, representing the "old white hat with a crape" such as is worn by the hero of New Orleans, and having upon it the (to the "Whigs") very frightful letters O. K., significant of the birth-place of Martin Van Buren, old Kinderhook, as also the rallying word of the Democracy of the late election, "all correct." It can be purchased at Mr. P. L. Fierty's, 486 Pearl street. Those who wear them should bear in mind that it will require their most strenuous exertions between this and autumn, to make all things O. K.

The first instance I have found of the use of "O. K." by anyone outside New York City is that of a correspondent in Montpelier, Vermont, in a letter dated April 20, 1840. As printed in the N. Y. *New Era,* April 27, p. 2a, he promised to bring about "the redemption of our State from British Whiggery next fall! Will you not say 'O. K.'? Go ahead!" As the presidential campaign grew hot in the fall of 1840, the expression "O. K." swept over the entire country, reaching Ohio, for instance, early in September. Examples showing the historical continuity in succeeding decades are provided in Thornton's *American Glossary* (1912). It was popularized in England at least as early as the 1880's; and according to the recollections of the English scholar A. G. Bradley, it was originally taken over by "Artemus Ward," who was received in London in 1866 with great acclaim.

On the basis of the documentary evidence here presented, the many ingenious etymologies that have been put forward, such as the ten assembled by Mencken in his *American Language* (4th ed.; 1936), must be thrown out of court. In the tracing of word history nothing can take the place of specific historical citations. These are now available for "O. K."

DOUBLE-TALK TALES

BY OTIS FERGUSON

My Heart's in the By-lines: The Word of Harpoot Keoft

THIS is not a letter to the editor like any letter to the editor. It is longer. It is by me, Harpoot Keofte, and it may be one of my best. How should I know, it may be lousy, but it's great.

America is great too, a terrible and beautiful and magnificent and lousy country, I love it. America for the good simple people; I love and understand them and why the hell should I spend my time rolling around with anyone else except producers, agents and Sherman Billingsley? That is the true meaning of democracy, which I am going to put into a play.

The Theatre is dead.

"The Beautiful People" is undeniably the greatest play since "The Time of Your Life." What do I care for prizes? I would turn it down if they offered it to me, which they didn't, the imbeciles. In the Critics' Circle, all five great critics voted for my play. It is nothing to me. George Jean Nathan is a great critic.

What is the theatre? The theatre is life, and life must be lived beautifully, by people. What are the plays today? Dead. Scenes, characters, lines, plot, chairs for the audience, lights, curtains.

Where I am writing this play in a telephone booth waiting for my connection to Los Angeles life flows richly, terrible and wonderful, and my three Syrian cousins and my Russian uncle are gambling at poker with me. I am going to put them all in a play, with a setting of a telephone booth though I am opposed to settings. They

—Woodcut by H. A. Mueller.

are lovely, unspoiled; they do not know much about poker.

That is the meaning of creation, but that is two other plays.

Now I am writing a play without lights, curtains, scenes, lines, characters or chairs for the audience. Only life. There will be a box office, it is nothing to me. This is while I am waiting for Mannix of Metro, Cohn of Columbia, Zanuck of Zanuck on my Los Angeles connection. Hollywood is dead, there are no good pictures. I want $2,500. The play is laid on a floor, and there are no lights. An old man walks around through the audience, which is standing, and he holds in his hand an old army bugle which once when I was starving I bought in a hockshop run by a simple wise old man who finally met my price of thirty-three cents. It has no mouthpiece. It is slightly bent since my Fresno grandmother cooked a beautiful pilaf in it. But the old man holds it to his lips and plays. It is beautiful. Tears run down the face of the audience, whip around backstage and run down again. The old man keeps walking through the audience and playing this song on the bugle. It is the only one he knows and it has only one note. He is a great musician.

This is the first half, though I am opposed to acts. My nephew from Iraq has just asked me innocently why his two pair don't beat my three aces. Life is tragic to the young, but lovely, and I am singing him a song my uncle used to hum in the language of the old country, and he is full of joy again. Mannix said $2,500 a picture or a year? I hung up, my Armenian blood boiling at the tragedy of meanness and my Assyrian accent coming down on the folding. Get me Zanuck at Zanuck.

In the second half, an old dog comes out and follows around in the old man's tracks, sniffing the scent. He is looking for the old man and as he goes he plays the same song on an old army beagle. It is sad and beautiful. He cannot find the old man, who has gone over to Sardi's where I told him to wait for the payola. The old dog searches and searches and his sorrow and search are wonderful, the quest of all people in life. This is the development part of the play, because the dog is carrying the rest of the

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cast, a troupe of trained fleas I picked up once when I was starving in the cities of the world, and trained myself to sing some of the beautiful sad songs of the old country, near Fresno. This provides a great heightening in the audience reaction as the fleas have also been trained to know supper when they see it. Man in his hunger must be fed, it is the rule of life and symbolic. The dog finally picks up the trail to Sardi's and goes out, mournful and great and two of my nephews aged four come on carrying an old army cannon I picked up while I was starving in the public park at Richmond. They fill the cannon with black powder, railroad ballast, tire chains, broken glass and rusty nails, and blow it up. They are great actors. This is for patriotic national defense, a timely and interesting question.

Zanuck said my agent had already quoted him $150 for me and got thrown out, it is nothing to me. I have finished another play and recklessly tossed back the money I have cleaned my relatives for in poker. It was all in Confederate bills.

The old man will have to wait a long time in Sardi's for the payola but I go out of the phone booth whistling, because life is marvelous and breath-taking and lovely and I have to look up Leonard Lyons and that damn double-crossing agent.

HARPOOT KEOFTE.

P.S.: Print it or throw it away, it is nothing to me, though it is always my practice to make a careful word count and I am sending carbons to Photoplay, Theatre Arts, Herman Shumlin, and the Dentists' Annual.

HARP.

"Double-Talk Tales" will be an occasional feature. The editors invite SRL *readers to suggest authors as candidates for the parodies.*

Tragic Miracle of the Sea

TWO SURVIVED. By Guy Pearce Jones. New York: Random House. 1941. 193 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by ERIC DEVINE

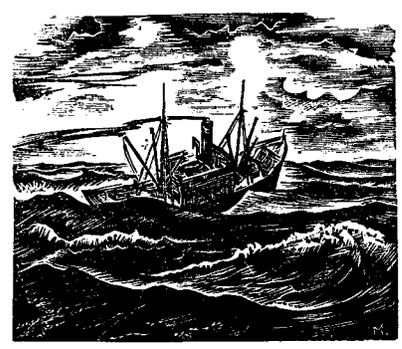
THIS is the story of two British seamen who survived the horrific ordeal of seventy days in an open boat following the sinking of a merchantman by a German raider in the Atlantic. Guy Pearce Jones, a reporter, tells the story in a simple and straightforward manner, without the embellishment or slick-magazine folderol that might have spoiled it. The result possesses those characteristics of an epic: the tragedy, the humor, the strength, and weakness of human beings.

When their vessel, bound for South America with a cargo of coal, was destroyed by gunfire off the Azores, seven men, including the Chief Officer, were able to get into the jollyboat and elude the German raider that obviously intended to sink the ship without a trace. Several of the men were wounded by machine-gun bullets and shrapnel, but all of them at once settled down to the routine of sailing a very small boat westward toward the islands lying between North and South America. The boat was poorly provisioned in every way, and the Mate took charge—dressing wounds, rationing what food and water there was, arranging watches, keeping a log.

But before the little boat had been under way a month, five of the men had died, and the two remaining—Robert Tapscott, nineteen, and Wilbert Widdicombe, twenty-one—were miraculously able to live in that boat, baked by a tropic sun, suffering from pellagra, with little water and virtually no food, for seventy days! They land at last on the island of Eleuthera, the Bahamas.

The first of the five to die, Mr. Pilcher, a radio officer whose foot had been shattered by shot and had soon gangrened, is one of the most gallant young men you will meet in any book for a long time. But they were all amazing men. William McFee in his chatty and sympathetic introduction says this of them:

"All these men met death with fortitude and modesty. Their lives were as precious to them as are ours to us. They were all tragically young. They were fighting the greatest battle of our times, the Battle of the Atlantic. It is not yet won. Many more young lives will be lost before it is won. This story of seven men in an open boat, if it proves nothing else, shows how little the breed of seamen has deteriorated, and how richly they deserve our prompt assistance."



Born in the Blitz

SHELTER. By Jane Nicholson. New York: The Viking Press. 1941. 241 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by FRANCES SMYTH

IT is uncomfortable to review a first novel by a young Englishwoman living in England which has as its background bombed London. It is uncomfortable, because it is trivial and tedious and academic to debate whether a young woman with the courage and diligence to produce a piece of creative work in England now has written a good novel or a bad novel.

August, September, and the first two weeks of October, 1940, frame the story. The three chief actors are Louise Mason, her husband, Jos, and Jos's mistress, Camma. Louise and Jos have been married seven years, and still live together, but with increasing indifference. Jos is never more than a nebulous figure to the reader; nor is Camma, presumably beautiful and desirable to all men. In August, 1940, Louise has given up her job as private secretary to a novelist gone to safety in Hollywood; Jos is working seven days and six nights a week with the A.F.S.; Camma is briefly and badly attempting war work; and, during a particularly bad air raid, Louise tells Jos that she is pregnant. Interwoven with this personal plot are all the hideous reported-and-photographed circumstances and events; blazing buildings, corpses, cripples, and blackness. The freshest and almost the most moving scenes are those in which exhausted and jangled people, bathed and tidied, employ all their shrewdness and resourcefulness to get across the city for a proper meal correctly served in one of the good restaurants still open.

The specific human situation in Miss Nicholson's novel is amateurish in conception and in handling; the people have no substance; too much is left out and most of what is put in seems wrong. But the real trouble with the book is hardly her fault. To write about London during a year of bombardment is no task for a beginner. There is too much fearful power in the mere literal labels: direct hit, children killed, houses shattered; only a great and practised writer can master and manipulate events that carry so well their own terrible connotations. Straight newspaper dispatches, bald statements of fact, accomplish what special correspondents have so far failed to do; nobody has seemed able to add local color to an air raid without making it sound invented, however well the reader knows that it has occurred.

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Sea Power Today

SEA POWER IN THE MACHINE AGE. By Bernard Brodie. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. 1941. 466 pp., with index. $3.75.

Reviewed by W. D. PULESTON

THIS is a finely conceived, carefully developed, and well written book. Every naval student is aware of the vast changes in navies during the machine age but it remained for Bernard Brodie to reveal the immediate result of each successive development on the ancient and conservative naval profession, and their cumulative effect on present day navies. The subject divides naturally into, and was treated by the author under, five subheads: the effect of steam propulsion, of iron and steel hulls, of the continuous competition between gun and armor, of the submarine and its peculiar weapons the torpedo and mine, and of aviation and the threat from the skies. Continuity has been secured by using the Anglo-French naval rivalry as the central theme until the almost simultaneous arrival on the naval scene of the United States, Germany, and Japan; the stream of the narrative then broadens to include the leading navies of the world, employing the same judicious treatment. The facts are well substantiated and the numerous books and documents cited constitute a comprehensive bibliography of the subject.

The first two sections are mainly of historic interest but are necessary to an understanding of the development of navies. The last three, dealing with the ever-present contest between ship penetration and protection, with submarines and aircraft, are of immediate and tremendous interest. Beginning with Paixan's shell the narrative carries the gun versus armor contest through the battle of Jutland and the sinking of the *Graf Spee* off Montevideo. After tracing the development of the submarine through its infancy, Brodie analyzes its use during 1914-18 and the present war by digging out the facts and emphasizing them without distorting their significance. The section on the effect of aviation in naval warfare is likewise factual and objective. In discussing the present position of the United Kingdom the author reminds us that Great Britain did not have to concede air superiority to Germany. Aviation fits neatly into any fleet, the British isles are favorably situated to dominate the approaches to northern Europe by superior aviation operating with a superior fleet. In any part of the world air strength is the natural ally of naval strength; supported by overseas bases, with suitable garrisons and anti-aircraft batteries, they are today the essential elements of sea power.

Mr. Brodie handles himself well in the field of strategy and tactics, but he is overly impressed with an inferior "fleet in being"; even in sailing days it only deterred the timid; with the advent of aviation an inferior fleet must come out and fight or be destroyed at anchor by enemy planes. Sea power sharpened by superior aviation will not require ten years to win the next war.

This book needs to be read to be appreciated; in addition to the narrative it contains so many interesting facts that will serve as a ready-reference book to any one interested in the development of modern navies.

W. D. Puleston, a Captain (retired) in the U. S. Navy Reserves, is author of "The Armed Forces of the Pacific."

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 381)

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Autobiography with Philosophy

FOR THE HEATHEN ARE WRONG. By Eugene Bagger. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1941. 370 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by JOSEPH HILTON SMYTH

TO catalogue Mr. Bagger's present book is difficult, for actually it is three books in one. To take it in the order in which the author presents it; it is, first, an account of the last days of a falling France—and of exodus from that France, soon fallen. It is, secondly but only sketchily, an autobiography—but an autobiography of the mind rather than the body. And third, it is the outline of a philosophy, or perhaps one should say, a philosophy in the making. For he is convinced that civilizations die, not from conquest from without, but as the result of weakness from within; a theory, incidentally, that has elsewhere been advanced, and one which, in its militaristic adaptation, has been made use of by Herr Hitler.

Mr. Bagger is honest in describing the mental and spiritual journeyings that first carried him to Catholicism and later led him to re-enter the Church. Born in Budapest, son of a tolerantly agnostic Hungarian-Jew, he first embraced Catholicism at the age of seventeen. Then he digressed, to accept and reject Freud, then to accept and later re-adapt Adler. It was a line by Aldous Huxley that, ironically enough, was responsible for Mr. Bagger redirecting his mental steps toward the Church. For Huxley wrote "to talk about religion except in terms of human psychology is an irrelevance." Mr. Bagger promptly rephrased the line, saying to himself, "To talk about human psychology except in terms of religion is an irrelevance."

That, in brief, may be called the cornerstone, or keystone, as you will, of his philosophical structure. And it is in the light of this philosophy that he surveys the last days of France, and the current chaos in Europe. In consequence, to the average reader, Mr. Bagger's interpretation of this period is open to debate. For example, it is not quite within the record of ascertainable facts that all Spanish Loyalist refugees in southern France were "Spanish communists and anarchists." But it should be noted that in France, Mr. Bagger's political sympathies leaned in the direction of the Action Française, that is, the extreme Right. Similarly, in the matter of the Spanish Civil War, he was an ardent Franquist.

But to repeat: Mr. Bagger is rigidly honest in his description and analyzing of his mental and spiritual journeyings. Because of this very honesty, his book cannot be dismissed as merely the religio-biased account of a nonparticipant in the struggles of today.

Death Valley Chronicle

THE SHADOW OF THE ARROW. By Margaret Long, M.D. Caxton Printers. 1941. 310 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by EDWIN L. SABIN

THIS book upon the Death Valley region of eastern California takes its title from the saying of the desert Indians that no man should venture far into the desert unless he is prepared to sleep in the shade of his arrows. That is, to carry the allusion further, he must depend upon his own resources.

Dr. Long, the author, of Denver, won her medical degree at Johns Hopkins. Her scientific training reveals itself in the thoroughness of her narrative, which, however, does not deny it a sprightly style. Part 1 relates, in journal form, the account of her automobile trips, beginning in 1921, when she and her companion were the first women to enter the Valley unattended—their main reliance a road map. Part 2, captioned "The Death Valley Trail of 1849," deals exhaustively with her special interest, the Jayhawkers and other companies of Overlanders who essayed the Valley, and is featured by extracts from their accounts, and discussions as to the actual itineraries and the landmarks mentioned. The section of Appendices supplements these chapters with reprint material obtained from many sources, to which is added an "Automobile Log of 1940 on the Trail of '49." There are illustrations from photographs, sketch maps, an excellent Bibliography, and a first-rate Index.

As a Death Valley chronicle this should appeal, in its personally conducted tours by a trained observer, to the general reader; the historical research part, with the discussions as to places, does not apply so widely, but nevertheless makes the book of comprehensive value to the student of the early travel and adventure period. He may find some details that have escaped his attention. And since women served and suffered upon those first trails, it is fitting that we should have the sympathetic comment of a woman historian.

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Life History of the Wolf Girl

WOLF CHILD AND HUMAN CHILD. By Arnold Gesell. New York: Harper & Bros, 1941. 107 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by GOODWIN WATSON

SO long as people debate the contributions of heredity and environment—and no termination is in sight—they will be referring to the children who grew up like wolves.

A generation ago the psychological giants like Cattell, Thorndike, and Gesell were very sure that instincts biologically inherited set the patterns of human development. Children, they maintained, walked erect not because parents taught them to toddle, but as a result of sheer maturation. It was believed instinctive to convey food to the mouth with hands, to prefer day rather than night for roaming, to cover nakedness, and to seek out companionship with other human beings.

On an October evening, in 1920, the Reverend J. A. L. Singh, and a man of Kora race called Chunarem, waited on a high, concealed platform to see a Man-Ghost reported to run in the jungle. "Close after the (mother wolf and her) cubs came the 'ghost'—a hideous-looking being—hand, foot, and body like a human being but the head was a big ball of something covering the shoulders and the upper portion of the bust, leaving only a sharp contour of the face available and it was human. Close at its heels came another awful creature exactly like the first, but smaller in size. Their eyes were bright and piercing, unlike human eyes." So the missionary in his diary—now in the process of being edited by Professor R. M. Zingg of Denver University—describes his first sight of "The Wolf Children of Midnapore."

Professor Gesell has sketched in a little book which can be read in an hour the story of Kamala and Amala—foster children of a wolf pack—from birth until their untimely deaths. Amala was about eighteen months old when recaptured and she lived less than a year in the missionary orphanage. Kamala must have been about eight when she faced the bitter transition from her right and comfortable life in the jungle to the uncanny hardships of civilization. She died of uraemia in 1929, at the age of about seventeen.

The Singh diary, if we may judge from the choice bits Gesell has quoted, must be fascinating. In a quaint solemn style, the most incredible happenings are recorded with faithful accuracy. Its full publication will be awaited with keen interest.

To the narrative Dr. Gesell has furnished a background out of his years of observation of the normal growth of children. He attempts to reconstruct the experience of Kamala and to fill in some of the many blanks in the record. He compares her development with that which might have been expected in a human environment. "At the age of thirteen years her behavior picture presented a striking psychological resemblance to that of an eighteen-months-old child." At seventeen, Kamala had attained a level of language and social behavior fairly comparable to that of most children between three and four years of age. This retardation seems to have been wholly the result of living in a cave with wolves instead of in a hut with people. Dr. Gesell finds good reason to believe that Kamala was born a normal infant, and that no illness had impaired her central nervous system. Probably if wolves could have set intelligence quotients in terms of their culture, Kamala at the age of eight would have surpassed every other human being.

Environmentalists have been winning most of the encounters during the past decade, but they have had no other evidence so compelling as the experiences of the wolf-children. Even those "instincts" of walking, talking, feeding by hand, day activity, dress, and gregarious response which seemed so securely grounded in human nature, must be reinterpreted when we learn that a normal child, under other circumstances, will run on all fours, see better in darkness, howl in the dead of night, lap up her food, tear off any clothing, and growl ferociously or even bite when other human beings approach.

The power of habit is evident throughout the tale, but nowhere more clearly than in Professor Gesell's own effort to conclude that his traditional view of human growth as determined by natural maturation needs no modification in the light of this extraordinary observation.

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By HUGH WALPOLE
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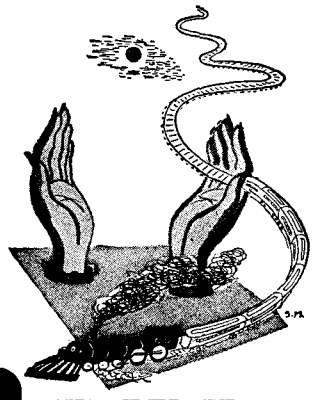

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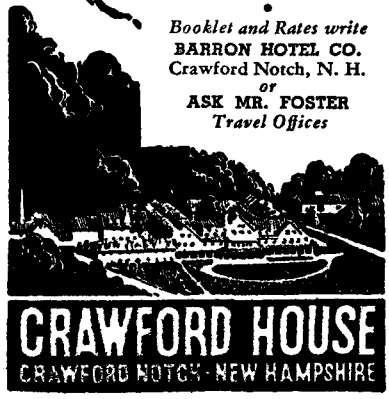

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TRADE WINDS

FEW books are being published this month, and those members of the *SRL* staff who are not on vacation and who have not been off getting married seem to have chosen, as their favorite topics of conversation, the chances of the Russians, the incredible batting spree of Joe DiMaggio, and the speed with which "Berlin Diary" is being bought throughout the country.

☞This last movement is richly deserved. William Shirer's book contains every element of human interest in addition to being perhaps the most revealing book on or about contemporary Germany. Which reminds us of another book which does for Russia what "Berlin Diary" does for Germany. It is Louis Fischer's "Men and Politics." Suggestion for any reading vacationist: take along both books.

★ ★

☞Just in case any of our readers are interested: Miss Loveman is visiting in Joplin, Missouri; Mr. Canby is roughing it in the hills of Connecticut; Bill Benét is honeymooning along the coast of some Massachusetts town, and Miss Spector, of the advertising department, motored up to New Haven and got herself married to a leading attorney of the same city. So all in all—best wishes.

★ ★

☞The John Day Company can take it. Soon after publication of Frederic F. Van de Water's "The Reluctant Republic," the reviewers and critics suggested that the book ought to have an index. Presto!—no sooner said than the John Day people prepared it for the next edition.

★ ★

☞James Burnham is getting credit for having more or less predicted the present Russo-German war in his book, "The Managerial Revolution," written last winter and now a strong seller. While one recent commentator suggested that the new war is "hard on the theory of the managerial revolution," the record shows this war actually follows from the theory set forth in Mr. Burnham's book. The publishers call attention to the final pages of Chapter XIV of the book, in which Mr. Burnham says that there is now reason to expect Russia to split into a far eastern and western section, with European Russia subordinated to the European center; and that the process "will presumably include war, one or more of the managerial wars of tomorrow."

☞Bargain Note: The Cambridge Modern History is now only $19.50. We think this item of sufficient news importance to merit free advertisement. This great historical work in 13 volumes should grace the libraries of all students of history. We are informed by the Macmillan Company that this offer is made possible because of the advantageous rate of exchange between England and United States.

☞First there was the sale of a hundred million Little Blue Books; then Random House recently announced a ten-million total sale of The Modern Library titles; and now we hear from Walter J. Black, sponsor of the new Classics Club, that he has sold his millionth copy of the collected works of Shakespeare. Runner-up to Shakespeare in popularity among books sold at odd prices such as 89 cents apiece are deMaupassant, Dickens, Tolstoi, Balzac, Poe, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Zola. According to Mr. Black, men, not women, purchase most literary masterpieces.

★ ★

☞Richard Harding Davis rides again! Away back in 1906 the famous war correspondent included in his book, "Real Soldiers of Fortune," a chapter on Winston Churchill, at that time fighting in the Boer War. Davis was much impressed with young Churchill and in a letter to his mother he tells of the relief of the British besieged in Ladysmith: "The incoming army had had fourteen days hard fighting at the end of three month's campaigning, but were robust and tanned, ragged and caked with mud. As they came in they cheered and the garrison tried to cheer back, but it was like a whisper.

"Winston Churchill and I stood in front of Gen. White and cried for an hour . . . (You) saw only the side of it that was before you, the starving garrison relieved by men who had lost almost one out of every three in trying to help them."

☞Now comes Scribners with this chapter in book form and titled "Young Winston Churchill." The illustrations are particularly interesting; there are many photographs of Mr. Churchill as one of Davis's soldiers of fortune.

★ ★

From Richard Armour, who says,

IT'S A CRIME

I know no book
Which in the place of
I'd not prefer one
On "The Strange Case of—."

LOUIS GREENFIELD.

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Books in Brief

THE PAINTINGS OF JAN VERMEER. *Phaidon edition. Oxford University Press.* $3.50. This is doubtless the most complete book devoted to the work of that famous and mysterious contemporary of Rembrandt, Johannes Vermeer of Delft. It consists of a brief text by Thomas Bodkin which recites all that is known of this incomparable painter of luminous interiors. Altogether Vermeer, or Van Meer, has left behind him only forty paintings, many of them portraits and most of them in miniature. His "Street in Delft," "Head of a Girl," "A Lady Writing a Letter," "The Procuress," etc., are familiar to everyone with a knowledge of the great age of Dutch painting. The mystery has nothing to do with the artist's gifts. Even in these mediocre reproductions they cry aloud to the observers. He not only revealed the essence of the women he painted, but the manner of their being so that one looks for a moment breathless into a way of life that for three hundred years has been dead. The mystery is Van Meer's fame in the midst of the horrible and grotesque battle of the arts—the survival of great men or their death at the hands of the patrons, sycophants, dealers, agents, and whatever manner of men have profited over three centuries of trading on the calculated rise or fall of artists's reputations. Perhaps no one excelled Van Meer in his day for what he wanted to accomplish; perhaps no artist should be more posthumously grateful for his limitations. Any collector should be delighted with this volume which assembles and dissects his life work.

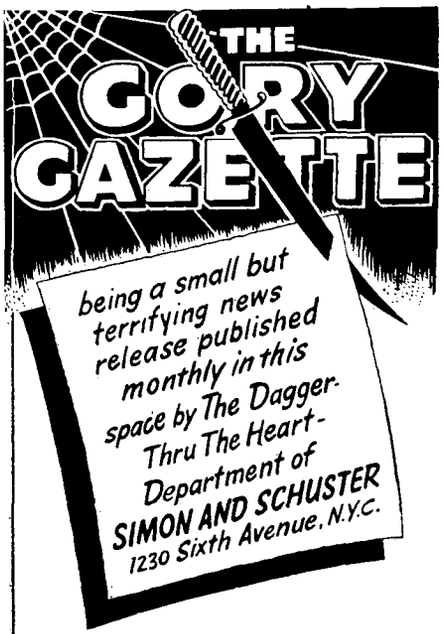
INDIAN AGENTS OF THE OLD FRONTIER. *Flora Warren Seymour. D. Appleton-Century Co.* $3.50. In the eighteen-thirties the Indian agent was no longer a kind of ambassador who treated with Indian tribes as almost independent states, but a man who lived among the Indians as guardian, trustee, and advisor, and sometimes as their friend. Mrs. Seymour's book records the procession of more notable Indian agents from 1850 to the first decade of this century. There was a long struggle between the U. S. Army and the newly established Indian Bureau as to which should minister to the dying race; as to whether the Indian should be killed by kindness or by massacre. The multitude of dishonest agents, political grafters or downright criminals destroyed the Indian groups even more effectively by thievery, corruption, and forbidden rum. Kit Carson, Father Wilbur, John Clum, General R. H. Pratt, and General Hugh Scott, through lifelong services to the Indians, and whose lives are colorfully recorded by Mrs. Seymour, have brought about our final settlement with the remnants of the men who once ruled this continent—they are to be forever, like the poor and the aged, permanent wards of the Republic.

NOT BY BREAD ALONE. *Mary Francis Doner. Doubleday, Doran & Co.* $2.50. Mrs. Doner's latest novel is

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER GIVES A LOVELY LIGHT *John Stephen Strange* (Crime Club: $2.)	Suspicious death of elderly aristocrat in Gramercy Pk. mansion starts Insp. Honegger on trail that gets horrider and horrider.	Extra well-written and capably constructed tale with ample suspense and dénouement that seems just a bit forced.	Worthwhile
THE INVISIBLE WORM *Margaret Millar* (Crime Club: $2.)	Psychiatrist and puzzled policeman wrangle pleasantly through series of poisonings in highly-strung small-town family.	Wacky humor is strongest point of story but Dr. Prye and Insp. Bailey are sleuths that will bear watching.	Commendable
REUNION WITH MURDER *Timothy Fuller* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Bop on head and revolver shot finish of reuning Harvard grad. Jupiter Jones solves strange case in mad dash from altar.	Reunion background and festivities attractive. Puzzle is original and enticing—though wind-up may arch a few eyebrows.	Good fun
THE SHY PLUTOCRAT *E. Phillips Oppenheim* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Multimillionaire Maurice Teyl leaves pre-war America for native Britain, and, to avoid publicity, has many adventures.	Light-hearted but rather heavy-handed Oppenheim venture into fields better cultivated by P. G. Wodehouse.	Trivial


THE
GORY
GAZETTE
being a small but terrifying news release published monthly in this space by The Dagger-Thru The Heart-Department of
SIMON AND SCHUSTER
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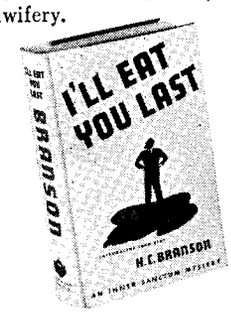
About six months ago what is known in the trade as an unsolicited manuscript arrived at Inner Sanctum Mysteries. (Unsolicited simply means that it didn't come from a known author, a literary agent or a friend of a friend.) Two hours after it was opened the birds in the Dagger-thru-the-Heart Dept.—kept around for just such emergencies—began to sing. Because that tidy bundle was a prize package.

It contained the manuscript of *I'll Eat You Last* by **H. C. Branson,** which now, all prettied up by assembled typesetters, jacket designers, binders, and blurb writers, has just been published. But word for word, comma for comma, the reader will find the same story that sent our jaded editors scurrying for ecstatic adjectives. In fact, it's the first Inner Sanctum Mystery to make its appearance without benefit (sic!) of editorial midwifery.



The Gory Gazette's modest policy forbids quoting our own reports on *I'll Eat You Last;* you wouldn't believe them anyway. But we'll tell you that it's an air-tight detective story without a single (cross our fingers and hope to die!) red herring, and that it introduces a new detective who could make a monkey out of **Superman** (which, by the way, may not be such a bad idea). And we *will* quote a Detroit bookseller whose comment reached our desk about five minutes ago: "What a luscious morsel **Mr. Branson** has given us with *I'll Eat You Last.* It's a real plum—one of the best I've read in a long time. It's the kind of mystery I like immensely—straight detecting with a real wallop."

McCurdle says it's hot and going to be hotter. He recommends an air cooled movie for that fevered brow, and, as a cure for practically everything, a copy of

I'LL EAT YOU LAST
by H. C. Branson ($2)

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the story of three generations of a family living on the borders of the Great Lakes and of three women who in spite of adversity make a success of love and marriage. It is imbued with a warm sentimentality that springs from genuine emotion, and if it seems to say that a woman's love conquers all, and presents her male partners as the weaker sex, the novel's readers are hardly likely to object. For feminine readers this form of fiction takes the place of the hard-fighting, tough historical novels of pioneer and revolutionary days; there are other and not less painful or less satisfying ways of heroism than war and bloodshed. Mrs. Doner lives in Massachusetts, but she was born in Port Huron, Michigan, and spent many summers aboard Great Lakes freighters which her father commanded. She has used this background in several of the score of novels she has published, and since she knows and respects the people among whom she grew up, she is able to produce full-blooded and three-dimensional characters.

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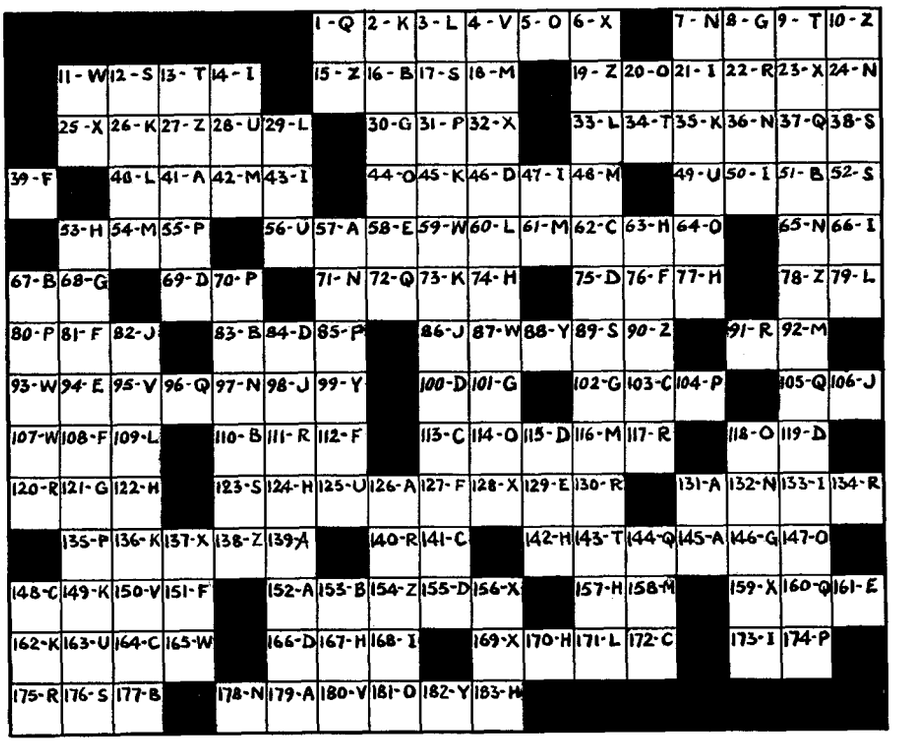
Double-Crostics: No. 382

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 13 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Very miserable.

B. Ino's husband.

C. Nasal twang.

D. Thisness.

E. Modern Persia.

F. Three pointed rocks west of Isle of Wight.

G. Serving lad.

H. Scottish cap (comp.)

I. Ratify with a seal or stamp.

J. Birds' beaks.

K. Jehoram's wife (Bib.)

L. Sprightly.

M. American musician born in Alsace (1861-1935).

N. Fiery furnace hero (Bib.)

O. Miserly giver (colloq.)

P. English writer ("Characters") (1581-1613).

Q. Innovation.

R. English editor and author (1873-).

S. Tower above.

T. Pertaining to the dawn.

U. Deep, close pass.

V. Largest of Marianas Islands.

W. Animated.

X. Goddess of fertility and war (Phoenicia).

Y. Slip or lapse.

Z. Fishes commonly called porpoises.

WORDS

152	57	145	131	126	179	41	139
110	83	153	16	51	67	177	
113	164	103	148	141	62	172	
84	115	119	155	166	46	100	69	75
129	161	58	94				
108	81	76	112	127	151	39	
8	102	146	68	121	30	101	
122	167	74	53	183	142	170	157	77	63	124
50	173	21	47	14	168	133	43	66
98	106	86	82				
149	35	2	73	136	26	162	45
40	79	33	60	109	3	171	29
116	158	18	42	92	61	54	48
65	36	97	24	71	7	178	132
44	181	5	114	147	118	20	64
70	80	85	104	135	31	55	174
144	72	105	37	96	1	160	
134	140	130	117	175	120	22	91	111
89	17	52	38	176	12	123	
9	143	34	13				
163	125	56	28	49			
95	4	180	150				
11	107	59	93	87	165		
128	25	156	159	137	32	23	169	6
182	88	99					
90	138	78	19	15	154	27	10

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